

TURBULENT MEETING OF SCHOOL BOARD ON MERIT SYSTEM RESULTS IN PARTIAL SURRENDER TO DEMANDS OF TEACHERS

"Merit System" Now Becomes "Marking System" and the Teachers Are to Have a Chance To Be Reinstated Without Loss of Salaries—Two Teachers Wrongly Marked, Says Deane.

FIVE COMMISSIONERS SUPPORT THE TEACHERS' END OF THE ARGUMENT

Deane Defends System Under Sharp Volleys of Questions From Commissioners Opposed To It—Teachers Lose Two Promised Supporters When Poll is Taken—Lawyers on the Job.

Battered for hours with demands and questions, indignant protests arising from pent-up feelings, and denunciation of the secrecy that has shrouded their actions, the members of the board of education who conceived the "merit" system for teachers, partly surrendered to public opinion last night.

Crushed beneath the weight of criticism, the board voted unanimously to give the teachers who were "docked" another chance, by reimbursing them at the end of the school year provided they attain the proficiency mark.

The committee on schools, which recommended the report favoring the teachers, so far as it does not contain the "merit" system, that once was a favorite with them. They called it a marking system, last night.

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There's been no standard of marking," said Mr. Bell, "as that instance shows. So far as I know the principals were never told whether a passing mark was 75, 80 or 90."

"Yes, they were, too," shot back Dr. Deane with some heat. He brought out the book of rules to show that the principals were to mark teachers on a scale prescribed by the board or by the superintendent.

Mr. Hurley then suggested that the teachers had been punished enough. He thought they shouldn't be deprived of the advance voted them last fall. Future laxity, he said, could be corrected by a fine.

He was ready to submit a motion restoring the advance to the teachers when someone inquired as to who would be included in the revised report. That started things again.

"I'm in favor of that," said Mr. Bell, "but I'd go a step further. With those teachers who have attained the maximum, I would hold them liable to a reduction if their work does not come up to the standard hereafter."

Then Dr. Ryan obtained the floor and caused something of a sensation by his remarks. He had names and facts and dates and spoke right out in meeting.

"Some of you members doubtless will remember that we recently paid to J. H. Van Sickle of Springfield the sum of \$2,500 for investigating our school system. In his report he said our teachers were 'notably good and loyal' and praised the staff in the highest terms."

"How did it come that Dr. Van Sickle, an expert overlooked these 80 or 40 teachers who are now deprived of an advance in salary because a supervisor says they're deficient?"

"How does it come that this committee on schools would overthrow, in 30 or 40 cases, the action of this whole board, last January, in voting increases of \$50 to the grade teachers?"

"I have a few cases in particular that I'm going to place before this board as they were placed before me."

The first is that of Evelyn K. Cook, who has been deprived her increase. She has been teaching for about 10 years. Her principal marked her above 80 on her year's work. The supervisor, she said, called on her last October and was in her classroom about 15 minutes. Supervisor Wendt, she says, has never visited her room. No one has criticized or commented upon her work to her.

"Another case is that of Augusta Mendel. This girl was never required to take an examination while in the grade or high schools, such was the standard of her scholarship. She won five special diplomas for exceptional scholarship ability. Her average for four years in high school was 93.14. She passed the Regents' examination in New York. Her work in the schools here hasn't been criticized. Yet she is deprived of her regular increase, because her rating as a teacher is low."

"A third case," Dr. Ryan continued, "is that of Margaret McGuinness. This girl says she has never been tardy and has been out but two weeks in seven years service. She has not been visited by the supervisor or by Dr. Deane. On May 11, she asked Supervisor Wendt for her marks and she was told that they were not all in. A few days later she was told by him that her mark was over 80."

"I would also call your attention to Dr. Ryan called the attention of the board to the case of a west end school teacher who had been dropped, as the report says, because her marks were not high enough."

When Dr. Ryan finished, Mr. Hurley wanted to know when "this marking system" was started.

"Five years ago," said President Havens.

"We never heard of it before," said Ryan. "Why wasn't some mention ever made of it in the monthly reports of the superintendent?"

Mr. Bell said that in the instance of Miss McGuinness, her room was continually broken up by requests of parents that pupils be transferred. Her principal, said Mr. Bell, thought Miss McGuinness' work was satisfactory.

"If you don't like the case to overlook these deficient teachers," Dr. Ryan persisted, directing his inquiry straight at Dr. Deane.

"He didn't visit all the teachers or all the schools," said the superintendent.

"He didn't? How did he get his money then?"

Dr. Deane didn't know.

Inquiry was then raised as to why Supervisor Wendt was recommended for a raise of \$200 and the supervisors of drawing and singing got none.

President Havens said that was because the singing and drawing supervisors had been given assignments.

Dr. Osborne then barked back to the system of averaging marks.

"Do you think it is fair," he asked, "for the supervisors' mark to be made equal in weight with that of the principal? A principal is in continual touch with the teacher. The supervisor isn't. I should think the principal's mark should be worth four times as much in computing a final average."

"What we ought to have," suddenly interjected Mr. Bell, "is someone to supervise the supervisors."

Mr. Challenger said he noted that among those slated for a raise is "one teacher who passed but seven out of a class of 40 to a higher grade."

Mr. Deane then explained that he had instructed the principals to mark on these phases of school work:

1. Attention to study in classes.
2. Diligence in study hours.
3. Diligence in class work.
4. General order of classroom.
5. Accuracy of instruction.
6. Logical order of instruction.
7. Thoroughness.

Mr. Hurley said that the remark was credited to the principal of Prospect school.

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8. Securing of expression from pupils.

9. Professional co-operation.

10. General progressive spirit.

Dr. Deane explained that the first four subjects came under the head of "Discipline." The next four related to "Teaching Ability." The last two, he said, were "more personal." Ten in each subject were voted "excellent," seven were "passing," and six or under were "poor."

When Dr. Deane finished, Mr. Hurley asked him if there were any cases where the principals were ordered to lower marks they had given teachers.

The superintendent answered in the negative. He did say, however, that he had investigated cases where there appeared a wide discrepancy between principals' markings and the ratings by the supervisors.

"How do you mark a teacher whom you've never visited?" asked Dr. Ryan.

"I haven't given any marks," said the superintendent.

"How about the mark from a supervisor who has visited a teacher once in the school year—and then only fifteen minutes?" Dr. Ryan insisted.

"Do you think it's a fair marking system?" asked Mr. Challenger.

Mr. Bell then said a few words in support of the principals who didn't criticize the teachers' work because they were "friends of the teachers."

"These principals aren't friends of the teachers," he said with emphasis. "Inquiries next brought out the fact that of the three teachers dropped, Miss J. Elizabeth Bentley had been teaching one year, and Miss Bessie Bergin for seven years."

At this point Judge T. C. Coughlin was granted the floor. Judge Coughlin roundly scored the marking system as unfair. He suggested that a board of examining be appointed to select tests for teachers "rather than leave their marks to the caprices and whims of supervisors and principals."

"When the vote had been taken Commissioner Coughlin said: 'All we are looking for is the moral effect. We have no desire to keep any teacher from earning a deserved increase and I think if any member will now make an amendment to the report so that any teacher on this list makes good during the year she will obtain her increase of salary, the members of the committee on schools will vote for it.'"

Commissioner Ryan then offered a motion that Miss Bessie V. Bergin be reinstated. He said he did not think she had been marked fairly. He paid compliments to the high marks she has received in her school work. The vote to reinstate Miss Bergin was almost unanimous but Miss Bentley and Miss Murphy having a champion at the meeting the vote that they be dropped from the teaching list stands.

The discussion of the system of marking teachers continued even after the vote had been taken.

"It's not a fair system," declared Commissioner Hurley. "I have been told of an instance where a teacher who was marked 'poor' was considered an insolent reply to her question and for that she was marked low."

Commissioner Hurley then made a motion that the committee on schools and the superintendent of schools revise a new and fairer system of marking the work of the teachers. Dr. Osborn declared in his judgment the present system was very unfair and should be materially changed.

"I don't think any rule of the board is necessary regarding a system of marking teachers' work," said Dr. Deane. "I have always felt that as superintendent of schools I possessed the right to institute a system of checking up the work of the teachers. Some of the teachers to whom I have repeatedly spoken in regard to their work now tell me that they cannot remember any criticism I ever made. I believe many of these teachers are doing all they can do. They are teachers who are simply below par."

This statement brought quick and sharp replies from Commissioners Challenger and Bell. "How about a teacher in Barnum school," asked Commissioner Challenger. "who had only seven of her 43 pupils pass the examinations for the next grade? I find her slated for a raise here."

"Put in Commissioner Bell, 'how about the teacher who was afterward and saved 60 per cent. of that room so that the pupils moved on? Why isn't she in here for a raise?'"

Dr. Deane said he appreciated the good work of the teacher who saved the school but that because a teacher passed a high percentage of her pupils it did not always follow she is a good teacher.

"Well," said Commissioner Bell, "let's establish a fairer system of marking. If necessary, let's supervise the supervisors. No one can spend 15 minutes in a room with a school teacher and then give her a fair marking on her year's work."

Unless legal action is taken by some of the teachers or the board is overwhelmed by the criticism, it is likely the marking system will stand. After the meeting the committee on schools was shown to be inaccurate. Commissioner Hurley proposed that the committee on schools be instructed to formulate a new marking system and submit it to the board.

"We'll not make the motion read 'marking system,'" casually suggested Mr. Bishop, who is a member of the committee on schools.

That's the way the motion read when it was put to the board and the plan was adopted. As a result it is believed the committee on schools will bring in the same system, and the same persons will support it.

Resume Playing In Women's Golf Tourney

Searborough, N. Y., May 25.—Play in the Women's Metropolitan golf championship tournament was resumed at the Sleepy Hollow Country Club today under more favorable weather conditions than yesterday.

The fairway was soggy and the putting greens a trifle slow after the rainstorm, but all the golfers showed marked improvement in their play in the championship.

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DISTRESSING SCENES WHEN SURVIVORS OF TORPEDOED LUSITANIA WERE TAKEN ASHORE



LUSITANIA SURVIVORS AS THEY WERE LANDED AFTER TERRIBLE ORDEAL

In the accompanying illustration are shown actual photographs of survivors of the ill-fated Lusitania as they arrived at cities in Ireland and England. Wherever the survivors went they were followed by great crowds of sympathizers. The sight of women bereft of husbands and brothers of children whose parents had been lost on the ill-fated ship drove some to tears, others to expressions and acts of frenzy. No. 1 in the above shows a woman and her child who were picked up by the lifeboats. The husband and father went down in the wreck of the ship. No. 2 shows the arrival of a group of survivors in London. In No. 3 are Mr. John Lane and Miss B. Williams, two of the survivors, and a little girl who lost her father, landing at Queenstown, Ireland. No. 4 shows a mother and child who were picked up by lifeboats, photographed in Queenstown. No. 5 shows two boys named Gardner, survivors being led by a porter, shown on the right, into a station hotel.

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